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ABSTRACT

This study reflects the feelings and impressions of women physical education teachers in 1975 at a time when many departments were in the process of merging. At that time few of the women held major administrative positions. Most women taught, published, and foresaw future graduate work in the areas of teacher preparation and curriculum. Only about half of the women had published. The majority of women in separate departments saw women as more professionally productive in 1975 than in 1970, and 73 percent thought job and personal satisfaction to be higher. Most women in combined departments saw improved professional productivity for both men and women, but less job satisfaction for women. (Author)

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A SURVEY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE WOMEN PHYSICAL EDUCATORS CONCERNING CHANGES IN DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE, JOB SATISFACTION AND GRADUATE WORK

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A Survey of the Perceptions of College Women
Physical Educators Concerning Changes in
Departmental Structure, Job Satisfaction and Graduate Work

During the first half of this current decade, several changes have developed in college physical education departments. These possible changes have had both internal and external stimulation. Two of the most prominent have been the effects of financial recession and retrenchment and the Women's Rights movement expressed in Title IX and the pressure toward merged departments.

Separate men's and women's departments of physical education have been the most common organizational pattern in schools and colleges for several decades. In spite of a lack of professional opportunities in other areas of our culture, women in physical education have developed strong departments often marked by a commonality of beliefs and goals about education and athletics, and a staff size which was comparable to that of the men's departments (excluding athletics). The increased emphasis on equal opportunity for women, the growth of women's athletics, and the desire of school administrators to reduce expenses combined as factors producing a trend toward merged departments. The changes in administrative structure and emphases have been viewed with mixed emotions both in preparation for the merger and following the change. Women have expressed concern that the trend will result in a loss of administrative positions and staff, and change the career role alternatives available to them in separate departments. If this concern is justified, it would accomplish just the reverse of the goals intended by the forces working for equal opportunity for women and raise some significant questions.

From 1970-75, many mergers occurred and many began the process. No organized attempt has been made to uncover the reality of the situation. Some changes in role, goals, and planned graduate work seem to have occurred that could be attributed to additional factors as well as that of the combining of the departments. The conflict between an orientation toward coaching and the traditional role expectations of college faculty is a new one for women and has reduced the number of young women planning on entering graduate school. Faculty without doctoral degrees who received tenure in the growth years of the 60's have found themselves frozen in rank and salary but reluctant to pursue a graduate program that would mean a role change for them if not a change in location.

This research was intended as a means of gathering data on these two related conditions. It was hoped that knowing more about the perceptions of women in separate and merged departments and about their productivity, professional opportunities and job satisfaction would enable us to describe the current situation and enable administrators to project possible approaches to resolve conflicts if they appear.

With the additional stress placed on publication for promotion and tenure within departments and for indication of "scholarly achievement" for those seeking advancement through job opportunities, a view of the publication history of women in these departments has become increasingly importa[illegible].

A questionnaire was developed and sent to departmental chairpersons to be distributed to the women on the staff. Five hundred eighty-seven women from 92 colleges and universities responded. The schools selected were those listed in JOHPER as having professional preparation programs and offering master's or doctoral degrees.

The questionnaire was distributed in 1976, a time when many of the schools were merging men's and women's departments. Of the 92 schools involved in this

survey, 32 had combined between 1970 and 1975, 19 remained separate, 30 remained combined, 2 were in the process of combining and 3 had co-ed classes but were not combined administratively. Of the individual women surveyed 382 were currently working in a combined department, 200 were working in separate women's departments. Fifty-four had never worked in a combined department.

In departments where men's and women's departments had remained separate since 1970, the women were asked to preceive changes since 1970 in the professional productivity and job satisfaction within the department. Of the 200 women who were working in separate departments, 46 felt tney were too new in the department to answer, 111 felt there was generally more professional productivity than in 1970, 12 thought there was less. Seventy-three thought job satisfaction seemed higher, 30, lower.

Those women working in combined departments were asked to compare 1970 and 1975 levels and professional productivity and job satisfaction for men as well as women. Of the 382 women, 7 felt they were too new in the department to know; 44 saw improved professional productivity for men; 14 saw reduced professional productivity for women, and 61 saw improved professional productivity for both; 6 thought professional productivity reduced for men; 34 for women and 15 for both. Thirty-eight women perceived job satisfaction as higher for men, 11 as higher for women, and 24 higher for both. Eleven thought job satisfaction was lower for men, 82 thought it lower for women, and 37 for both. Table 2 summarizes these results.

Could the age of the women who were evaluating job satisfaction have an effect on their assessment of this feeling? All age groups felt men were more satisfied with their jobs than women. Seventy-seven percent of those responding at ages 50-59 felt that women were less satisfied. Similar patterns occur at the 40-49 and 30-39 age levels - 55% of the 40-49 group felt women were less satisfied and 35% felt both were dissatisfied. In the 30-39 age group,

Table 2

SEPARATE DEPARTMENTS			COMBINED DEPARTMENTS	
Greater Professional Productivity				
N	%		N	%
111	72	For: Women	14	4
		Men	44	14
		Both	61	19
Reduced Professional Productivity				
		Women	34	11
12	7.8	Men	6	2
		Both	15	5
Job Satisfaction Higher				
		Women	11	3
73	47	Men	38	12
		Both	24	8
Job Satisfaction Lower				
		Women	82	26
34	22	Men	11	3
		Both	37	18

the percentages were 56 and 37, respectively. It is interesting to note that only in the age groups between 30 and 49 did women respond (35 - 37%) that both men and women were less satisfied with their jobs in 1975 than in 1970. The men were not considered as less satisfied by the women of the 50-59 age group.

In summary, 73% of the women working in autonomous departments of physical education felt that the women showed greater professional productivity in 1975 than in 1970. Only 4% of the women working in combined departments saw this trend toward greater professional productivity for women. Nineteen percent felt that both sexes showed increased professional productivity. If this 19% were combined with the 4%, that still leaves only 23% as opposed to the 72% of the women in separate departments who perceived this trend.

Publication is but one evidence of professional productivity but this survey revealed that 280 of the 587 women (48%) had not published at all. Ninety had published one article; 67, two articles; 47, three articles; 13 had published between 10 and 19 articles; 9 had published 20-30 books, 4 articles, and six more than 30. One women had 180 publications and another over 200. Ninety of the women had published books mostly in the areas of sport specialties of curriculum and professional preparation. Thirty women had published the 38 books in the sport specialty area and 24 women the 30 books in the area of curriculum and professional preparation.

In departments that had remained separate, 68% of the women responding felt job and personal satisfaction were higher in 1975 than in 1970. Thirty-two percent felt it was lower.

In combined departments, 5% of the women who responded felt job satisfaction was higher for women, 40% thought it was lower for women; 12% felt it was higher for both and 18% thought it was lower for both.

All of the women were asked to list benefits, as they saw them, of working in combined and in separate departments. Listed benefits were then classified by the author into intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. Extrinsic benefits were defined as those which benefitted the department or the university as opposed to the intrimsic benefits which favored tne individual faculty member. Eight-five percent did not list any intrimsic benefits of combined departments whereas 76% listed one to five extrinsic benefits of combined departments such as greater budgets, less administrative duplication.

Again, 82% did not list any intrinsic benefits of working in separate departments. Fifty-six percent listed one to seven extrinsic benefits of autonomy. Many of the women expressed fears of being obscured professionally by men's programs.

As would be expected, those areas of professional preparation and curriculum and sport were the areas with which the women identified as their major teaching thrust. Although most of the women taught activity courses and theory courses in methods curriculum and instruction, there were many (23%) who taught in the science-based courses such as kinesiology and physiology of exercise. The percentages of women teaching courses in administration, psychology of sport, philosophy, history, tests and measurement, research, introduction tc physical education, and principles and problems were about equal at 7-10%. The majority of the women had no administrative responsibilities. Although 13% of the women held major administrative positions, only 5.7% checked administration as their primary responsibility. A "majo r administrative position" was identified as a department head, athletic director or coordinator of the professional or general physical education program. Nineteen percent of the women held minor administrative positions such as coordinators of student teaching or of a particular activity within the general program.

The areas of professional preparation, curriculum, and sport specialty also appeared as the main foci of future graduate work for those anticipating doing same. The focus of future graduate work was directed mainly toward professional preparation of teachers and coaches and improvement of personal teaching skills. Other choices of focus, listed in descending order were administration, social sciences (applied to physical education), natural and physical sciences, humanities, motor development and adaptives.

The greatest number of those women (370) who anticipated doing further graduate work saw it as necessary for personal satisfaction in increasing competencies and knowledge and to "catch up" in their current fields (210). Eligibility for salary increase (197) and eligibility for promotion and tenure (190) were next most popular choices. Another 134 women say graduate work as needed to increase capabilities in research and publishing.

Summary

This study reflects the feelings and impressions of women in 1975 at a time when many departments were in the process of merging. At that time few of the women held major administrative positions. Most women taught, published and foresaw future graduate work in the areas of teacher preparation and curriculum. Only about half of the women had published. The majority of women in separate departments say women as more professionally productive 1975 than in 1970, and 73% thought job and personal satisfaction was higher. Most women in combined departments saw improved professional productivity for both men and women, but less job satisfaction for women.

Now that most physical education departments have been merged for several years it would be interesting to repeat this study.

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